

**CONTACT:**

**COMPOST HAPPENS**

You are a faithful recycler and wonder what more you can do to reduce your contributions to the local landfill or incinerator. If you have a yard, you should practice composting – a simple, easy solution to let Mother Nature do the work for you.

Earth has its own natural recycling system to break down organic material into rich dirt called “compost.” It’s valuable to anyone with flower gardens, shrubs, lawns, houseplants, and planter boxes because you don’t have to buy potting soil, fertilizers, mulch and other expensive soils and enrichers. Compost added to the soil results in healthier plant growth, because it improves soil structure, adds nutrients, helps retain moisture and provides a good environment for earthworms and other beneficial soil organisms. As an added benefit, it’s chemical free and therefore much safer for your home.

In addition to improving soil, composting provides homeowners with a way to help solve Massachusetts' growing solid waste problem. Organic materials such as leaves, grass clippings, brush, fruit and vegetable peelings, and wood comprise almost 50 percent of our household waste output. Recognition of overfilling landfills has led Massachusetts to ban the disposal of leaves and yard waste. By composting this material at home, you help to divert organics from landfills and incinerators and at the same time save on disposal costs and produce a valuable material for your own use.

**Getting Started**

To compost your yard and kitchen waste all you need is a small bin constructed of wood or you could purchase a plastic compost bin. Check to see if your community has a composting bin distribution program, or order from a garden catalogue, nursery or hardware store. The benefits of an enclosed bin include protecting the pile from pests, holding heat and moisture in, which speeds decomposition, and improving its neat appearance. In urban areas, rodent-resistant compost bins with secure covers and floor and openings no wider than one-half inch must be used.

**A home in your yard**

The composting bin should be placed in a convenient location in your yard, which has exposure to the sun for at least part of the day. A shovel or rake for turning and spreading the compost is the only other tool needed to start composting. An especially nice thing about composting is that anybody can do it. It's very simple, and can be adapted to almost any situation or lifestyle.